



**King County**

**Ron Sims**

King County Executive

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION**

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**Regional Governance (RG) Subcommittee  
King County Charter Review Commission  
Meeting Minutes – September 24, 2007  
NCOB, 5:30pm-7:30pm**

The September 24, 2007 meeting of the Regional Governance Subcommittee of the King County Charter Review Commission was called to order by Chair Bryan Glynn at 5:40 p.m.

**Commission members in attendance:**

Bryan Glynn, Chair  
Doreen Cato, Vice-Chair  
Kirstin Haugen  
John Jensen  
Terry Lavender  
Gary Long  
Mike Wilkins  
James Williams

**Absent:**

Juan Bocanegra  
Sharon Maeda  
Lois North

**Staff:**

Mark Yango, Charter Review Coordinator  
Becky Spithill, Project Manager, Charter Review Commission

**Council and PAO Staff:**

Rebecha Cusack, Council Liaison to the Commission  
Jennifer Stacy, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Prosecuting Attorney's Office  
Nick Wagner, Council Co-Liaison to the Commission

## **1. Opening Remarks and Issue Assignment Discussion**

Bryan Glynn identified questions the RG Subcommittee needs to consider: How were issues assigned to committees and how can anomalies best be dealt with and organized?

Mark Yango gave a brief overview of the issue selection and subcommittee assignment process. In consultation with Mrs. North and Governor Lowry, it was decided that any issue that affected voters directly would be assigned to Governmental Structure (GS) Subcommittee. Consequently, this subcommittee will be working on elected versus appointed officials, balance of power issues, the initiative process, CRC recommendations process, instant runoff voting, and partisanship, which leaves it with a challenging roster of issues that are potentially controversial and will require extensive analysis. The Rural/Local Subcommittee was assigned issues involving rural representation and local service in unincorporated areas. Finally, the RG Subcommittee was assigned the following: Regional Committees, departmental issues, county budgeting, council procedure, and ad hoc issues.

Mr. Yango explained that staff and the Commission can continue to look at issues that cross issue areas. Gary Long asked how we can move some issues from the RG Subcommittee to the GS Subcommittee, specifically those having to do with the budget and Sheriff's Office. He argued that most of these have to do with how government is organized.

Mr Glynn commented that some of the issues presented by Councilmember Lambert and others have to do with balance of powers, i.e., balancing the Sheriff's power with the Executive.

Bryan's recollection of the efforts to limit the Sheriff's power were that they came out of a conscious decision to limit the powers of that office and keep them in the legislation. There was some question whether the Sheriff isn't beholden to the Guild, and therefore not in a position to negotiate a contract. Mr. Jensen said that as an elected official, the Sheriff was not necessarily beholden to the Guild; Sheriff Rahr was not. Mr. Yango recommended that questions of subcommittee assignments be taken up with the full Commission.

Ms. Cato commented that personnel/HR issues, as well as many of the issues highlighted by Councilmember Lambert, should fall into the Governmental Structure area. She concurred with staff's recommendation the full Commission should address subcommittee assignments.

## **2. Suggestions for Issue Management and Identification of Priority Issues**

Mr. Glynn commented that some issues are ambiguous; they are not necessarily technical, although it is possible that they might be contentious (sexual preference, whistleblowers). For those issues that do not make the top five list, the subcommittee will find opportunities to make adjustments later in the process. Mr. Yango suggested that ancillary issues be dealt with in one meeting.

Subcommittee members identified their top issue(s).

**King County Library System** – Mr. Williams proceeded to make a case for including the King County Library System as a top priority for the RG Subcommittee. The PAO had re-analyzed the issues and advised the subcommittee (via email) about how the CRC could amend the charter to have control over selection of the library board so that the selection process for trustees provided more voter accountability and authority for getting rid of trustees for cause. Currently, the process is no more than the executive director (appointed by the County Executive) submits nominations to the County Executive for his approval. There is a lack of representation and responsiveness. For places outside of Seattle, where county residents rely on the county's library system, this is a significant issue. The library system is a regional agency, serving multiple municipalities. Ms. Cusack suggested that if the commission decided to send a letter on this issue, rather than recommend a charter amendment, the commissioners might want to consider asking the Council and the Executive to include in the county's state legislative agenda a request for amendments to state law provisions that seem to be obstacles to the changes that the commissioners would like to see. Mr. Williams suggested that the CRC both amend the charter and submit a letter to the legislature.

**Tribal Membership** – Snoqualmie Indian Tribe – Mr. Williams commented that the Tribe wanted to participate in the discussions of the Regional Policy Committee. It was pointed out that all tribes would need to be granted the same access to the process.

**Regional Committees** – Mr. Glynn, Mr. Jensen, and Mr. Wilkins; possible modifications for the Regional Committees:

- Operate and function in the same manner as a City Commission
- Expand representation/composition of the committees
- Scale down their size proportionally (to ease the County Council burden)
- Grant them more authority and autonomy by allowing them to elect their own chairs and develop their own work plans
- Eliminating dual referrals

**Vashon/Unincorporated.** – Ms. Cato

- Direct agencies to communicate with each other and eliminate silos where impacts overlap and particularly in the unincorporated areas; it is important to integrate policy, procedure and governance.

[Ms. Lavender said that this involves primarily permit issues and authorities that should be coordinated. This may not be a Charter issue.]

**Transitory Provisions** – multiple members

- Revamp them (technical issues) so that they are relevant or eliminate them

**Urban Transition / Unincorporated councils (rural)** – Mr. Long

- Support clarification of the role of unincorporated area council as transitional in urban growth areas.

[Mr. Long said this may not rise to the level of Charter material, but it's worth considering since there is a difference between the role of the urban rural council and those that exist within PAAs. Ms. Lavender suggested that this would be an issue that the

Rural/Local Subcommittee should take up. Some question as to whether this would be an issue taken up by the Rural/Local Subcommittee.]

**Allotment Process** – Ms. Cusack informed the subcommittee that the CRC would be receiving a letter from the Council discussing the recommendations by the financial policy advisory task force calling for elimination of the allotment process, which is now obsolete due to technological advance.

**Regional and Local Budgets** – Mr. Long identified the need to make the distinction in the budget between regional and local services. Mr. Glynn pointed out that the budget now reflects this breakdown, but since that could change; he asked whether the Charter needed to address this issue. It would represent that the County should be thinking in terms of its regional function versus its diminishing municipal function.

**Ombudsman** – Ms. Cato commented on Brian Derdowski's recommendation that the office have a dedicated budget to avoid interference. She noted that Lucy Steers representing the Municipal League had supported this recommendation, which suggested that there may be merit in looking at this. Ms. Cato said she will follow up and staff agrees to contact the Ombudsman Office to inquire about its position.

**Reverse Contracting** – Gary noted that SCA had identified this as one of its priority issues. King County prohibits reverse contracting (for various services) and there was a question about whether there was a legal barrier to it. Ms. Stacy will look into this. Ms. Cusack said that the Council has sent to the Executive one or two budget provisos asking the Executive to come back with a proposal on how to do that [reverse contracting] and has been told it can't be done, so that is an issue where the commission would need legal review if it decided to go forward.

**Annexation** – Given that annexation is subject to a vote of the residents and citizens choose not to annex, this suggests a conflict.

### **3. Priority Issues – consensus of the subcommittee**

- 1) Regional Committees
- 2) KCLS

Discussion: Urban versus rural issues and the budget issues may not rise to the level of Charter issues. In any event, the Budget Office is now breaking out the budget as recommended. Mr. Yango asked the members about their position on a biennial budget. Ms. Cusack said that it is being used to implement the transit initiative, but that the challenge is the county's computer system. Mr. Williams asked staff how the subcommittee will proceed in terms of tendering to the full CRC the subcommittee's recommendations. Staff informed members that it will develop initial language for the PAO's review. The subcommittees are expected to go to the full CRC with Charter amendments.

Mr. Wilkins volunteered to lay out all the charter amendments that the RG Subcommittee will consider and circulate so that at the next meeting, the subcommittee members could develop a work plan for addressing each. Mr. Glynn agreed to contact Councilmember Phillips and Mr.

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Williams agreed to contact spokespersons on the issues of the King County Library System. Mr. Wilkins suggested that Diane Carlson, the Bellevue's intergovernmental affairs liaison, be invited to speak to the subcommittee in order to provide the Bellevue perspective.

Ms. Cusack requested that members copy Mr. Wagner and her on emails and communications, so that they are informed when they attend subcommittee meetings.

Next meeting: Monday, October 1, 2007.

Respectfully submitted by Becky Spithill